



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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March 8, 1979

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

The Honorable Abraham A. Ribicoff  
The United States Senate  
Room 337 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Abe:

This is just a brief note to ask your help in straightening out an unfortunate and tangled situation that results from the detailed language of the recent "Ethics in Government Act". No one can doubt the excellent purposes that were intended by this legislation but it is evidently having a fallout of serious confusion and discouragement for people moving between academic life and government. The language in the act that refers to "aids..advises..or..assists" makes it difficult for a government official to look forward to any position of serious responsibility in a university after the completion of his government service. This is already upsetting a number of good people, to my knowledge several at the NIH, to the point where they may prematurely leave government in order to avoid the uncertain strictures of the law beginning July 1. The same provisions are likely to have a chilling effect on the recruitment of others.

I do not believe that this was intended to be included, with such severity, in the application of the law. Will you not support a move to stay its execution, perhaps a year at least for employment at educational institutions? This would allow a more complete exploration of the legislative intent and the actual consequences of specific language as drafted.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg